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EVELYN GOH
**THE STRUGGLE
FOR ORDER**

*Hegemony, Hierarchy, & Transition
in Post-Cold War East Asia*



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Post-Cold War East Asia

Evelyn Goh

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For Rosemary Foot

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December 2012

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List of Abbreviations

6PT	Six Party Talks
9/11	Al-Qaeda terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, 11 September 2001
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFC	Asian financial crisis
AMF	Asian Monetary Fund
AMRO	ASEAN Plus Three Macroeconomic and Research Office
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APT	ASEAN Plus Three
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AWF	Asian Women's Fund
BRIC	Association of emerging national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China
BRICS	BRIC economies plus South Africa
CBM	Confidence-building measure
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CEPEA	Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement in East Asia
CLCS	Commission on the Limits on the Continental Shelf
CMI	Chiang Mai Initiative
CMIM	Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization
CoC	Code of conduct
CSBM	Confidence- and security-building measure
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
CVID	Complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement (of nuclear facilities)
DMZ	Demilitarized zone
DoC	Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)
EAC	East Asian Community
EAEG	East Asian Economic Group
EAFTA	East Asian Free Trade Area
EAS	East Asian Summit

List of Abbreviations

EEZ	Exclusive economic zone
EU	European Union
EVSL	Early Voluntary Sectoral Liberalization
FDI	Foreign direct investment
FSB	Financial Stability Board
FSF	Financial Stability Forum
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
G7	Finance ministers from United States, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Canada, Japan
G8	G7 plus Russia
G20	Finance ministers and central bank governors from twenty major world economies
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GFC	Global financial crisis
GWOT	Global war on terrorism
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IFI	International financial institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMTFE	International Military Tribunals for the Far East
IR	International relations
JABF	Japan Association of Bereaved Families
JDD	Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean peninsula
JSDF	Japanese Self-Defence Forces
JSHTR	Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform
JSP	Japan Socialist Party
KEDO	Korean Energy Development Organization
KMT	Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang)
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
LWR	Light-water reactor
METI	Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Area
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NIE	Newly industrialized economy
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEG	Operational Expert Group
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
PMC	Post-Ministerial Conference
PRC	People's Republic of China
PSI	Proliferation Security Initiative
PTT	Power transition theory

RMB	Renminbi, the Chinese currency, of which the yuan is the primary unit
ROC	Republic of China
ROK	Republic of Korea (South Korea)
SCAP	Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers
SCS	South China Sea
SDR	Special Drawing Right
SFPT	San Francisco Peace Treaty
SLOC	Sea lines of communication
TAC	Treaty of Amity and Cooperation
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
UEP	Uranium enrichment programme
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
WMD	Weapons of mass destruction
WTO	World Trade Organization

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Introduction: Order Transition in East Asia

Questions of power, purpose, revolt, and order have dominated the international political agenda since the end of the Cold War. While these themes have always lain at the heart of strategic imagination, the uncertainties attending triumphant unipolarity, the rapid rise of new great powers, and unprecedented globalized interdependence have turned them into sites of particular discursive struggle over the last two decades. In East Asia, debates about power and order congregate around two looming trends: the changing character of American preponderance, and the resurgence of China. Because so much of the focus is on China as an actual or potential challenger to US preponderance in the region—and increasingly in the world—these twin concerns merge in three prominent alternative narratives about the future global order and the role of Asia as a whole within it.¹

First is the ‘Asian century’ narrative, premised on an ‘irresistible shift of global power to the East’, driven by ‘the rapid and massive redistribution of world industry and economic power’ towards the newer industrialized economies in East and South Asia.² This narrative contains civilizational overtones, recalling an older order, prior to Western industrialization, when Asian civilizations were among the most advanced in the world. At the regional level, some observers already see elements of the reconstruction of a Sino-centric system as East Asian states reorientate their economies and grand strategies to align with China’s. As China’s economic and political influence expands, strategically, neighbouring states will be more

¹ This study focuses exclusively on East Asia, defined to include principally the Northeast Asian security complex (China, Taiwan, Japan, and the two Koreas) and the Southeast Asian political and security complex (with specific focus on the most strategically active states, Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, and the collective ten-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations). The United States is treated as a part of the East Asian order because of its security and economic commitments, key role in providing public goods, and widespread regional ascription to and participation in its strategic agendas since 1945.

² Mahbubani 2008; Gilpin 1997, 23.

eager to accommodate Chinese interests and to avoid outright containment of China's power.³ Because of the unstoppable economic logic, the United States (and 'the West') must make room for and share power with China and other Asian rising powers, or risk conflict and even war.⁴ There remains, though, some disagreement about whether this shifting balance of power will be accompanied by a radical ideological challenge from 'the East'.⁵

The second, 'liberal hegemony' narrative presumes no radical changes in the ideological underpinnings of the global order in spite of rising powers in Asia and elsewhere. Rather, the main focus is on the continuing hegemonic role that the United States has played since the end of the Second World War, and the results of the 'extraordinary rise of the liberal democratic states from weakness and obscurity in the late eighteenth century into the world's most powerful and wealthy states, propelling the West and the liberal capitalist system of economics and politics to world pre-eminence'.⁶ The firm normative and institutional foundations of this liberal order ensure that, while rising powers may alter the material distribution of power in the world, the centre of normative and military power remains the United States.⁷ What will change are the means by which this liberal hegemony is exercised: the United States would increasingly share power with its democratic allies around the world. It might even yield some of its political and economic authority to accommodate rising powers, and if these secondary powers share sufficiently in the liberal orthodoxy, there might even arise a collective hegemony or concert of liberal great powers to orchestrate international order. The implication is that China would be given a seat at the great power table, and Asia would truly have risen, only if they successfully made the liberal transition.

In contrast, the final narrative of realist power balancing firmly identifies Asia as a whole as the locus of power politics in the post-Cold War era, because it is the region that contains the most promising rising powers that can challenge the United States. All rising powers will seek to maximize their power. China is the most prominent and powerful aspiring hegemon in the world and as it grows more powerful, it will first seek regional hegemony. Thus China will try to dislodge the United States from Asia at the same time

³ Kang 2003a.

⁴ Goh 2005a; White 2012.

⁵ E.g. Mahhubani 2008 controversially suggests that Asian states are rising successfully precisely because they have assimilated the 'seven pillars of Western wisdom'—the rule of law, free markets, science and technology, meritocracy, education, adaptability, and a pacific culture. For some suggestions of China posing alternative ideologies of development, see e.g. Kurlantzick 2007; Ramo 2004.

⁶ Ikenberry 2009, 71.

⁷ Ikenberry 2011 is the most prominent of the liberal institutionalists who propound this narrative, but others who see a gradually expanding realm of liberal capitalist states acting according to the precepts of democratic peace include Friedman 2005.

as it tries to maximize the capabilities gap between itself and its neighbours such as Russia, Japan, and India. China's neighbours will take fright and begin to arm themselves; eventually they will have to choose between allying with the United States to contain China, or bandwagoning with China as it challenges the United States. At the very least, an unstable multipolar system will result, and at the most extreme, a global power transition may occur if China and the United States go to war.⁸

The Puzzle

All of these narratives echo variations of a theme about changing power distributions and worries about a potential power transition between a declining United States and a rising China. Yet they are somewhat too categorical in the face of significant empirical challenges facing scholars of international relations trying to make sense of what is going on. Over the last two decades, the United States' military preponderance has increased, and it is still functioning as the classic hegemon in the international political economy. However, its leadership has come under increasing scrutiny, first over Washington's general commitment to underwriting international order once the Cold War had ended, then over its legitimate exercise of power after the invasion of Iraq in 2003, and over US capacity for underwriting the global economic order after the global financial crisis of 2008–9. The hegemon appears to have suffered a severe crisis of identity and authority that the 'liberal hegemony' school is perhaps too sanguine about. In parallel, China's remarkable economic growth has been accompanied by inflated expectations, increasing military expenditure, and a growing international political profile. Yet Beijing has been more diplomatic, more cooperative, and less overtly challenging of most international norms than many would expect from a rapidly rising power.⁹ This key rising challenger would need to take up greater responsibilities in maintaining the existing order or evince greater revolutionary zeal if the 'Asian century' expectations are to be fulfilled. At the same time, smaller states and non-state actors now play a more significant role in shaping international order, partly because of globalization and partly because of the plural nature of US hegemony. Non-great power states in East Asia also do not seem to conform to theoretical expectations in their

⁸ Friedberg 2011; Mearsheimer 2006; Betts 1993/4.

⁹ A range of careful scholarship has converged on this notable conclusion in recent years, be it regarding China's record regarding fundamental international norms like sovereignty, or key international regimes governing arms control, nuclear proliferation, finance, human rights, and climate change. See especially Carlson 2005; Kent 2007; Johnston 2008; Foot and Walter 2011.

strategic choices. Rather than balancing or bandwagoning, they hedge and try to lead multilateral institutions.¹⁰ If international order is widely supposed to be created by great powers, then these small states seem to have taken too much advantage of the voice opportunities offered in exchange for their acquiescence.

How can we analyse these complex empirical trends within a coherent conceptual framework that does not resort to polarizing theoretical positions? How do we account for the continuing though changing character of US preponderance, and the extent, potential, and meaning of China's rise? Is the centre of geopolitical gravity indeed shifting, and if so, where, how, and to what effect? What do non-great powers have to do with it? Ultimately, what kind of change is afoot—the overthrow of the world as we know it, or an adjustment in the membership of the great power club that will continue to institutionalize unequal power in the world?

The Argument

Focusing on East Asia—where important legacies of the Cold War endure and where the strategic interests of China and the United States most overlap—this book aims to provide the definitive account of what has been going on in strategic terms since the end of the Cold War. It begins with a clear recognition that power—particularly grossly unequal, preponderant power wielded by the United States and potentially by China—has crucial social foundations. Great power projects are mediated through social frameworks, often of a normative nature, that other states must acquiesce to. As important as their superior material resources, therefore, is how other states perceive and receive their unequal power. This leads us to questions about negotiation, consensus, and legitimacy that stem from the social nature of claims to power. In unpacking these issues, this book presents a fundamentally different narrative about the changing international order since the end of the Cold War. It argues that the most important strategic changes have reflected not balance of power challenges to US primacy, but rather a complex process of renegotiating the consensus on values, rights, and duties that underpins US hegemony vis-à-vis other states. This hegemony has been consolidated, but at the expense of significant alterations to its underlying normative terms and social structure.

In explaining post-Cold War East Asia, this book presents a distinct narrative of 'parallel resurgence'. Over the last two decades, alongside China's rise,

¹⁰ Goh 2007/8; Kang 2003a.

the United States has recovered the strategic initiative in East Asia that was undermined by its defeat in Vietnam and undercut by the disappearance of the Cold War rationale in 1989. Thus we are dealing not with the rise of one great power and either the static incumbency or decline of the other; instead, East Asia faces the active dynamics of a parallel strategic resurgence of both the United States and China. These dynamics cannot be understood simply in terms of Washington marshalling its material superiority to hold China at bay while Beijing rushes to convert its economic capabilities into military might and political clout to out-compete the United States. Just as significant are the processes by which both have been trying to institutionalize, to legitimize, to make desirable and 'normal' their unequal power vis-à-vis each other and their constituencies of other states in the region. The most crucial strategic developments in East Asia thus reside in these wider negotiations and contestations over ideas, collective beliefs and bargains about power, authority, security, and community; in other words, about the character of regional order. These discursive contests and normative practices make meaningful the complex material changes that have occurred, and it is by getting to grips with this struggle for order that we make sense of the nature of the ongoing transition in East Asia, and its global implications.

This book finds that US hegemony has been established in post-Cold War East Asia not merely as a result of its preponderance of power, but mainly because of the complicity of key regional states, which prefer to sustain a regional order underpinned by US primacy and leadership. Washington has been able to contain resistance by being relatively open to renegotiating the terms of its hegemony. One of the most prominent debates in the existing literature relates to the extent to which the United States is hegemonic, and whether it enjoys the ability to determine which rising powers to co-opt and accommodate, and how. Many existing works, however, focus on the material condition of primacy and unipolarity rather than the social relationship of differentiated authority that accompanies hegemony.¹¹ Others who have recently studied US hegemony tend, on the other hand, to rely on ideological assertion rather than empirical demonstration. This book contributes to the debate by providing an empirical study that substantiates and explicates the claim of continuing US strategic hegemony in East Asia. It also explores the instrumental as well as normative underpinnings to this hegemonic authority. Hegemony is, as always, accompanied by active resistance, but in East Asia, such resistance has been ultimately limited by co-optation, voluntary

¹¹ For these authors, e.g. Brooks and Wohlforth 2008, US preponderance of material power has a tendency then to become both the dependent and the independent variable. On the distinction between primacy and hegemony, see Clark 2011, 23–8.

and otherwise. Working from the understanding of hegemony as unequal power backed by a greater portion of consent than coercion,¹² this study emphasizes that consent to hegemony is negotiated and obtained for both material and ideational reasons. Even instrumental logic is underpinned by normative beliefs: for instance, the decision to rely on the United States as a regional security guarantor is based on calculations of US force projection capabilities in the region, but also on belief in the 'offshore power' narrative that portrays the United States as a benign external power that does not harbour any territorial ambitions in the region, but would agree with regional states on interpretations of critical crises and intervene in them to uphold values shared with regional states.

Finally, this book argues that hegemonic orders are not of a type, and provides an innovative analysis of how the character of the US-centred hegemonic order in East Asia is changing. It proposes that hegemonic order is produced and maintained by the negotiation of a social compact between the hegemon and other states. This compact is subject to renegotiation in the event of significant systemic changes such as the dissolution of the bipolar superpower conflict. The hegemon risks decline if these negotiations are unsuccessful; conversely, its authority is reified if these negotiations succeed. The analysis shows that even though a dramatic power transition has not occurred, many crucial battles have already been fought over the basic conceptual pegs, social norms, conflict management, justice claims, and institutional bargains that constrain power, justify inequalities, and permit governance, not just coexistence, in the region. In this process, the regional social compact that defines and sustains the hegemonic order is being renegotiated. The prevailing accounts of developments in East Asian security typically focus on outcomes and present curiously linear analyses that do not reflect the interactive ideational, discursive, and normative dynamics of change.¹³ In contrast, this book unpacks the myriad processes of interpretation, contestation, and adjustment that have characterized the region in the last twenty years. Together, they constitute an ongoing transitional process that is neither linear nor simple, and certainly has not yet led to definitive outcomes in terms of war or the emergence of a new hegemon. Instead, the region has been undergoing a transition since the dissolution of the Cold War, which left an uncertainly committed but preponderant United States within an East Asian regional security complex containing a number of other major and rising powers. During this time, the locus of regional power has

¹² Thus I lean towards the neo-Gramscian emphasis on international hegemony as resting on legitimate consent, as opposed to materialist accounts that stress preponderance of power. Contrast, for instance, Cox 1987; Augelli and Murphy 1993, with Keohane 1984.

¹³ E.g. see many of the essays in three important volumes: Alagappa 2003; Ikenberry and Mastanduno 2003; Suh, Katzenstein, and Carlson 2004.

been variously consolidated, diffused, shifted, or shared unevenly across a range of issues and crises. This book makes explicit the critical processes by which regional states are negotiating a new social compact that would consolidate US hegemony but also make room for rising powers and satisfy the insecurities of the smaller states, while promoting common interests and shared understandings of what constitutes ‘the good life’ in terms of regional international relations. It proposes that in this process, East Asian states have reconstructed the US hegemonic order to incorporate a layered hierarchy with more complex social processes of maintenance. In so doing, the contention is that post-Cold War East Asia has been undergoing not a power transition, but something more ambitious yet tenuous: an order transition.

Conceptual Framework

International Order

This study works from an ‘international society’ perspective associated with Hedley Bull and other scholars of the English School. This approach emphasizes the fundamentally social nature of the international system, in which shared norms, rules, and expectations constitute, regulate, and make predictable international life. As such, this study has two preoccupations: its starting point and key conceptual lens are order, and it regards ideational and normative contestation as crucial processes in negotiating order. ‘Order’ is encumbered with a plethora of possible definitions, but essentially, international order is a pattern or arrangement that sustains the primary goals of a society of states.¹⁴ It must involve limits on behaviour, the management of conflict, and the accommodation of change without undermining the common goals and values of society. There is a strong normative element, since international order as rule-governed interaction must be underpinned by an inter-subjective consensus about the basic goals and means of conducting international affairs.¹⁵ These shared understandings are historically contingent, evolving, and grounded in practice. They originate as shared ideas among actors, which are manifested in ‘historically constructed normative structures—in international legal rules and practices, international political

¹⁴ Bull 2002, 8. The common goals of international society that Bull identifies are the preservation of the state system and the society of states; maintenance of the external sovereignty of individual states; international peace; limitation of violence in international interactions; honouring of agreements; and observation of the rules of property (mutual recognition of territorial jurisdiction of states).

¹⁵ There is a fairly extensive literature addressing variations on these themes in defining international order. For two useful critiques and refinements, see Alagappa 2003, 33–69; Rosenau and Czempiel 1992, 10–18.

norms, and in the dominant ideologies and practices that animate them'.¹⁶ The process of creating these shared understandings involves contention, conflict, and negotiation, within which disparities of capability and influence exert their impact.

Unequal Power in International Society

Indeed, the practices by which states collaboratively protect and maintain the goals and values of international society encompass these inequalities of power, and privilege great powers. Crucially for this study, within international society, the privileged position of great powers is not just based on the structural logic of material superiority, but is substantiated and sustained by a reciprocal agreement between them and the smaller states—great powers are conceded special rights in return for performing special duties that uphold international society. From this perspective, the strategic conundrum in post-Cold War East Asia is an intensified version of the long-standing dilemma of how to tame on the one hand, and to legitimize on the other, unequal power. For powerful states, there is a constant need for what Martin Wight called 'the justification of power': the drive to turn brute ability for coercion into legitimate authority, because force alone is a costly and ultimately unreliable instrument of power.¹⁷ A significant portion of a great power's foreign policy construction and behaviour is thus devoted to legitimizing and normalizing inequality, and especially stark superiority. For smaller states, the preoccupation is with how to bind powerful states, to ensure limits to the potential use of great power so as to maximize gains in terms of public goods but minimize costs in terms of disruptions to the rules and institutions that regulate international life and grant protection and voice to the weak.

Furthermore, in a variegated region like East Asia, there are two key levels of unequal power—the special position of great powers above the rest, but also the power differential between the United States as the incumbent dominant power and secondary or rising powers such as China, Japan, and India. Justifying and sustaining this hierarchy of unequal power require a complex set of shared understandings and bargains about differentiated rights, responsibilities, spheres, functions, conflict management, and social preservation.

But this book makes a bolder claim about the unequal structure of East Asian international society: the core analysis suggests that in the post-Cold War period, the United States has not only been resurgent but has managed to establish hegemony in the region. This is reflected in its military

¹⁶ Hurrell 2007, 17.

¹⁷ Wight 1991, 99.

preponderance and its near-monopolistic role as public goods provider, but even more importantly in the American ability disproportionately to determine regional order. The core values and goals of East Asian regional society are deeply defined by liberal US principles, including the rule of law and an open economic system; the core institutions of this society include US alliances and war-making but also cooperative enterprises defined by American principles and commitment. This book works from the recognition of hegemony as an institution of international society, 'an institutionalized practice of special rights and responsibilities, conferred by international society or a constituency within it, on a state... with the resources to lead'.¹⁸ Hegemony is thus understood here in its classical sense, as being marked by superior capability, order provision, and the legitimate consent of followers. Legitimacy is the hallmark of hegemony as a social relationship, and what distinguishes it from preponderance or primacy; and hegemonic legitimacy derives in large part from the hegemon's willingness itself to be constrained by norms and rules, which are derived by negotiation with others rather than by imposition.

Bringing together these twin elements of order and hegemonic inequality suggests that while China's ascent and the consolidation of US hegemony represent a significant redistribution of power, the issue is not simply or even primarily the need to countervail overweening power with similar opposing capabilities. Rather, from an international society perspective, the main challenge is how to harness great powers to some collective authority, or to embed them within stable structures of interstate cooperation—not just to prevent war between them, but more to prevent the 'pathologies of power' from undermining the orderly functioning of international life along agreed rules and norms.¹⁹

Hegemony and Social Compact

Taming and legitimizing the deeply unequal power within post-Cold War East Asia thus depend upon negotiating new common understandings of values and rights and duties between the hegemon, the great powers, and other states. To capture the idea that the legitimacy of an existing order is underpinned by these negotiated understandings, it is useful to conceive of a social compact that exists between the hegemon (or great powers more generally) and other states. While social contract theories have been applied mainly to domestic political systems,²⁰ they are often referred to in

¹⁸ Clark 2011, 4.

¹⁹ Hurrell 2007, 31–2.

²⁰ See e.g. Lessnoff 1990.

international relations studies when alluding to the consensual nature of unequal power relations or institutional binding. Yet the idea of a social compact goes beyond consent, which might be a rather unilateral concept; instead, a compact refers to a reciprocal and conditional exchange of promises and binding agreements, whereby one party agrees to her part of the bargain as long as the other parties abide by theirs.²¹ Similarly, it is more accurate to understand great powers as being conceded their privileged positions and special rights by weaker states within international society in return for, and only if, they perform special duties or provide public goods that uphold the international order. The specifics of these special rights and duties come under constant negotiation, since 'the legitimacy of the institution of the great powers depends upon how far their special privileges are made acceptable to others'.²² But this compact is especially and inevitably subject to renegotiation in the event of significant systemic change; and the hegemon's role—indeed the hegemonic order—depends upon it.

Renegotiating Order: Contestation and Change

In formulating the problem this way, I am mainly influenced by the work of English School scholars such as Andrew Hurrell and Ian Clark, who have developed Bull's international society approach by sharpening the focus on the dilemmas of managing unequal power and mediating between conflicting values within international society.²³ My aim is to explicate the management of these dilemmas by uncovering the ideational and normative contestation in the collective processes of negotiating the social compact that would legitimize the changing character of the hierarchical regional order in East Asia after the Cold War. There have been other prominent studies of hierarchical orders as social contracts, but they have been essentially rationalist in that they are based on the logic of consequences, and this logic is either imposed by the powerful or somehow pre-understood between the powerful and the weak.²⁴ In contrast, my focus is on precisely the processes by which agreements about the particular social compact that determines

²¹ Hence, with the exception of Hobbes, other political theorists have tended to present contractarian accounts of resisting or limiting rulers.

²² Bull 2002, 194–222; Dunne 1998, 147.

²³ Others include Buzan 2008 and Dunne 2003.

²⁴ A good example is Lake's (2007, 54) extrapolation of international hierarchical relations from the domestic analogy of 'a bargain between the ruler and the ruled premised on the former's provision of a social order of value sufficient to offset the latter's loss of freedom'. Ikenberry's 2001 thesis about how victorious states exercise voluntary restraint to reassure weaker states and gain their support is similarly based on an unproblematic—indeed ideological—assumption that these actors somehow arrived at the shared belief that liberal institutions are the best means to achieve this bargain.